

Aligning Personal Values with Giving Objectives

What would you choose to do with your time if money weren't an issue? Who and what are most important to you? What do you enjoy doing most? These are questions that a career counselor might ask, but they apply equally to charitable giving decisions.

Cynthia Kett

Time and money are limited. Therefore, it makes sense to plan the use of these two resources to achieve your life objectives, one of which may be to benefit the world in which we live.

Do you plan your charitable giving or do you allocate your donations in a haphazard

manner? A planned approach might be to:

1. Ask yourself the questions above;
2. Decide in advance which organizations you'd like to benefit based on your answers;
3. Divide your total donated time and money amongst the charities that you've selected.

This structured process will

help you to make a conscious decision to align your personal values with your giving objectives. The charitable mandates that matter most to you will receive the majority of your donated time and money. Your relative contributions to those organizations will be more meaningful to them and to you.

For example, let's say that if money weren't a concern, you

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would work to address environmental problems and matters of children's health and well-being. These issues are impor-

tant to you because you love to travel and in the course of your travels, you've observed the impact of society's disregard for the environment. You've also seen how poverty and lack

of education can result in a bleak existence for children of developing countries. You enjoy spending time with family and friends, travelling (meeting new people and seeing new places), writing, public speaking, and teaching, which allows you to both impart knowledge and to learn new things from your students.


How can your personal values shape your giving plan? If you were ambitious and could afford the time and money to do so, you could volunteer your services to a humanitarian group with overseas projects to build schools for children in impoverished areas. You could elect to go for a finite or an extended period. Depending on the time that you had available, you could help to build a school (perhaps recruiting family and friends, too) or volunteer to teach after a school is built. By educating the children (and their families), environmentally-sound alternatives could be developed for generating income in place of logging nearby hardwood

forests. After you return home, you could increase the awareness of the organization's projects by writing and speaking to donors and other interested parties.

How have your personal values been reflected in your donation of time and/or money? You satisfied your love for travelling. If you were able to convince family and friends to join you, you shared a unique experience with them. You used your teaching skills to benefit children, their families and their environment. You used your writing and speaking abilities to encourage others to participate.

Not everyone can undertake a project of such magnitude; however, there are multitudes of worthy causes close to home. If you examine your personal values, you can find meaningful ways to make a difference.

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